DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 356 071 PS 021 295

AUTHOR Coakley, Barbara Fairfax
TITLE Improving the Academic Achievement of Third and Fourth Grade Underachievers as a Result of Improved Self-Esteem.
PUB DATE 93
NOTE 73p.; Ed.D. Practicum, Nova University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Achievement; *Achievement Gains; *Educational Improvement; Elementary Education; *Elementary School Students; Grade 3; Grade 4; Mathematics Achievement; Questionnaires; Reading Achievement; *Self Esteem; Study Skills; *Underachievement

ABSTRACT

This study was designed to improve the academic achievement of 35 third- and fourth-grade underachievers through improved self-esteem. Specific goals included focusing on self-concept and learning skills reinforcement, with the ultimate goal of increasing academic performance and motivation. Large group sessions with students focused on self-esteem enhancement strategies, study skills, and time-management techniques. Small group tutorial sessions focused on the reinforcement of math and reading concepts, while individual interaction centered on the development of mentor relationships with the school staff. Results of the practicum show that despite having experienced a traumatic event in the form of Hurricane Andrew, students readjusted and worked to the best of their ability. All of the objectives of the practicum were achieved: students exhibited significant improvement in self-esteem, reading levels, math levels, and overall grade point average; and teachers rated students' academic performance and self-esteem as having improved. Six appendixes provide examples of a student attitudinal survey, a teacher response questionnaire, a survey of reading levels, a survey of math levels, a report card grade point average form, and an underachievement checklist. Contains 49 references. (MDM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED356071

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Improving the Academic Achievement of Third and Fourth Grade Underachievers as a Result of Improved Self-Esteem

by

Barbara Fairfax Coakley

Cluster 38

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Barbara Fairfax Coakley

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Practicum II Report presented to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova University

1993

PS 02295

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier:

Dr Eduardo R. Rivas

Dr. Eduardo R. Rivas

Principal, Whispering Pines Elementary
Title

18929 S.W. 89 Road, Miami, FL 33189
Address

3-3-93
Date

This practicum was submitted by Barbara Fairfax Coakley under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

3-15-93
Date of Final Approval of Report

Georgianna Lowen
Georgianna Lowen, Ed.D., Advisor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This writer expresses much gratitude to practicum adviser, Dr. Georgianna Lowen for her unique gift of patience and expert guidance during this practicum experience. School administrators, Dr. Eduardo R. Rivas and Dr. Fred Albion, are commended for having provided superior professional support and advice.

Students and staff members who were involved deserve special acknowledgement because without their cooperative spirit this experience would not have been possible. The writer is grateful to a dear friend, Flora McKenzie, who graciously assisted in typing and took time to read and comment on earlier drafts. A final expression of love and appreciation goes to the writer's son, Andre; mother, Minnie; and family members and friends for their endearing patronage and dedication. Most of all, the writer thanks God for the wisdom, knowledge, and understanding needed to accomplish this mission.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT		iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS		iv
LIST OF TABLES		vi
ABSTRACT		vii
Chapter		
I	INTRODUCTION	1
	Description of Work Setting and Community	1
	Writer's Work Setting and Role	1
II	STUDY OF THE PROBLEM	4
	Problem Description	4
	Problem Documentation	5
	Causative Analysis	7
	Relationship of the Problem to the Literature	9
III	ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS	16
	Goals and Expectations	16
	Behavioral Objectives	16
	Measurement of Objectives	18
IV	SOLUTION STRATEGY	20
	Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions	20
	Description of Selected Solution	23
	Report of Action Taken	25
V	RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	31
	Results	31
	Discussion	38
	Recommendations	44
	Dissemination	44
REFERENCES		45

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Appendices

A STUDENT ATTITUDINAL SURVEY..... 51

B TEACHER RESPONSE QUESTIONNAIRE..... 54

C SURVEY OF READING LEVELS..... 56

D SURVEY OF MATH LEVELS..... 58

E REPORT CARD GRADE POINT AVERAGES..... 60

F UNDERACHIEVEMENT CHECKLIST..... 62

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Results of the Underachievement Identification Checklist	6
2	Results of Student Attitudinal Surveys	8
3	Report Card Grade-Point Averages	8
4	Comparison of Student Attitudinal Surveys	33
5	Results of Teacher Response Questionnaires	34
6	Results of Survey of Reading Levels	35
7	Results of Survey of Math Levels	36
8	Comparison of Report Card Grade-Point Averages	37
9	Report of Teacher Responses on the Underachievement Checklist	38

ABSTRACT

Improving the Academic Achievement of Third and Fourth Grade Underachievers as a Result of Improved Self-Esteem. Coakley, Barbara Fairfax., 1992: Practicum Report Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Descriptors: Underachievement/Self-Esteem/Academic Performance/Self-Concept/Academic Achievement/Elementary Education Strategies/Motivation/Mentoring/Affective Education/

This practicum was designed to improve the academic achievement of third and fourth grade underachievers as a result of improved self-esteem. Specific goals included focusing on self-concept and learning skills reinforcement with the ultimate goal of increasing academic performance and motivation.

The writer used large group sessions which focused on self-esteem enhancement strategies, study skills and time-management techniques; small group tutorial sessions which focused on reinforcement of math and reading concepts; and each student was matched with an adult mentor from the school staff.

All objectives were achieved. The results revealed that improvement was shown, in spite of students having experienced a hurricane. This indicates achievement of the basic premise underlying this practicum, the academic performance of underachieving students can be improved as a result of improved self-esteem.

Permission Statement

As a student in the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies, I do (✓) do not ( ) give permission to Nova University to distribute copies of this practicum report on request from interested individuals. It is my understanding that Nova University will not charge for this dissemination except to cover the costs of microfiching, handling, and mailing of the materials.

3/2/93 Barbara Fairfax Coakley

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

This practicum was conducted in a public school system located in an urban area of a southern state. Approximately 300,000 students were serviced in 163 school sites by over 20,000 employees. Student membership was comprised of 20 percent Non-Hispanic Whites, 33 percent Non-Hispanic Blacks, and 47 percent Hispanics. The socioeconomic make-up of the communities in the district ranged from low-to-high income. A school board consisting of seven elected members, who represent all geographic sections of the district, manage the school system.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer's work setting was a public elementary school. The school covers 10 acres, is surrounded by towering green pine trees, and is considered the nucleus of the suburban middle-class community in which it is located.

The majority of the students in the school were from families in the middle-to-high socioeconomic level. The citizens in the community consisted of people employed in various businesses, the school system, and other professions.

The racial composition of the 800 students consisted of 72 percent White, 14 percent Black, 11 percent Hispanic, and 3 percent Asian-American Indians. The faculty consisted of approximately 45 teachers with an average of 12 years teaching; the regular program pupil-teacher ratio is 20:1. Non-instructional staff included: aides, clerical, secretarial, and custodial personnel, while the administration consisted of one Principal, and one Assistant Principal. Faculty and staff worked together to attain goals through shared decision-making or school-based management.

The school was built on the open-space concept, which enhanced team teaching, individualized instruction, and/or flexible grouping. Academically, it was considered one of the best in the district; the median score in Reading and Math on the Stanford Achievement Test was the 80th percentile. Due to the socioeconomic status and the levels of achievement of 73 percent of the student population, the Comprehensive Education Program was the only funded remediation program. The average yearly attendance for students was 95 percent.

The educational program consisted of basic K-5 education and exceptional education classes with students enrolled in grades kindergarten through fifth. Approximately 40 learning disabled students are serviced by four teachers and three teacher aides. In addition,

approximately 50 gifted students were taught by two teachers. A full-time guidance counselor and a part-time psychologist comprised the support staff.

The writer was one of five fourth-grade teachers whose major assignment was to teach all basic education subjects, excluding Art, Music, or Physical Education. The writer's educational background included a Bachelor of Science degree in Education, and a Master of Science degree in Varying Exceptionalities. Teaching experience included 20 years of teaching grades kindergarten through fifth and various Special Education classes.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The students involved in the target group for this practicum were thirty-five third and fourth grade students. The group consisted of 20 boys and 15 girls. All were considered by their teachers to be underachievers, which is defined as students who are not performing to full intellectual abilities. Twenty-four students were functioning below grade level, ten were functioning at grade level, and one was functioning above grade level. According to teachers, all were functioning below their potential in school, and often in other areas of their lives. None of the students manifested specific identifiable learning problems which qualified them for special help. One was a high-ability student with consistently high standardized test scores but low grades.

Most of the students exhibited poor study habits, did not prepare for tests, spent little time at home doing work, and occasionally failed to turn in completed assignments. Some lacked organization, which impeded productivity. Two-thirds of the students were eligible for Compensatory Education, a federally-funded remediation program which is no longer available. Teachers reported

that some of the students were becoming discipline problems.

As a result, the students struggled to keep up with their classes. Most were placed in low reading and math groups because they appeared to be unmotivated and irresponsible. Some students, though considered capable by teachers, did less than the minimum amount of work necessary to pass. Some handed in assignments late. The work was often incomplete, sloppy, or illegible. Some students were shy, withdrawn, and had few friends. Their attitude toward school and school subjects was negative.

The ethnic make-up of the group consisted of 20 Whites, 8 Blacks, 6 Hispanics, and 1 Asian. All were English speakers. One-third came from single-parent family homes. Most were middle-class children whose parents were motivated to help them reverse an obvious pattern of underachievement.

The problem in this practicum was that the academic performance and self-esteem of 35 third and fourth grade underachieving students needed to be improved. If this problem were solved, these students would have better perceptions of themselves and their abilities, and their academic performance would have improved.

Problem Documentation

Three sources proved that the academic performance and self-esteem of the students needed to be improved. The

first was survey responses of third and fourth grade teachers and the school counselor who identified students who manifested symptoms of underachievement. It was revealed that all of the students identified manifested moderate to significant symptoms of underachievement (See Table 1).

Table 1

Results of the Underachievement Identification Check[1]--

Number of Students = 35

Symptoms	# of Students Manifesting Symptoms
1. Schoolwork is sloppy and illegible.	25
2. Often procrastinates.	21
3. Assignments are often incomplete.	32
4. Is having difficulty keeping up with class.	24
5. Work is not handed in on time.	32
6. Is disorganized.	20
7. Is irresponsible.	25
8. Is forgetful.	18
9. Lacks pride in his/her work.	30
10. Shows little motivation.	24
11. Avoids academic work.	30
12. Makes excuses for poor performance.	23
13. Avoids challenges.	35
14. Lacks self-confidence.	35
15. Becomes easily discouraged.	30
16. Abandons difficult projects.	35
17. Is easily frustrated.	22
18. Is functioning below potential.	35

The existence of the problem was also documented by results of an attitudinal survey, designed by the writer, to measure students' perception of their own academic performance, and personal relationships with their peers and teachers. It was revealed that the students had low

self-esteem. It was also revealed they had fewer friends than other students (See Table 2).

The problem was further documented by results of report cards of the students from the two previous reporting periods. It was revealed that all of the students had grade-point averages of 2.0 or less for those reporting periods (See Table 3).

Causative Analysis

The writer was of the opinion that there were several possible causes to the problem. One social factor was that one-third of the students came from single-parent family homes. The lack of a stable family created stress for children and made them less able to cope effectively with the academic and social demands of a school setting. Some children often lacked consistent family support, and tangible experiences to prove their worth and lovability. Due to a past which is not full of successful experiences, these students lacked the energy and courage needed to spearhead challenges confidently. Some students longed for personal meaning and fulfillment, but misdirected efforts often led to self-defeating behavior. These children were unable to see themselves in the future and often felt victimized.

Several school factors related to the cause of the problem. First, students had experienced failure early on and began to dislike themselves, which reinforced the

Table 2

Results of Student Attitudinal Surveys

Total Number of Students = 35

		Total # of Student Responses	
		Yes	No
1.	I like school.	1. 10	25
2.	I am pleased with the work I do in school.	2. 3	32
3.	My parents are pleased with my schoolwork.	3. 0	35
4.	I like school because I have friends with whom I can play.	4. 16	19
5.	I like doing work that is up to expected standards.	5. 35	0
6.	People make fun of me.	6. 20	15
7.	I like everyone I know.	7. 4	31
8.	I do my best in everything I do.	8. 12	23
9.	I cry easily.	9. 13	22
10.	Others seem to do things easier than I can.	10. 25	10
11.	I have trouble making friends.	11. 15	20
12.	I worry most of the time.	12. 15	20
13.	I am always kind.	13. 33	2
14.	Other people are happier than I.	14. 19	16
15.	I worry about how well I am doing in school.	15. 35	0
16.	Nobody likes me.	16. 7	29
17.	I always get in trouble.	17. 11	24
18.	Other students get all of the attention.	18. 30	5
19.	It is easier not to even try.	19. 1	34
20.	It is okay to make mistakes.	20. 35	0
21.	The more I practice something, the better I become.	21. 30	5
22.	I might not be able to do everything, but I can do something.	22. 30	5
23.	I have lots of people who love and care for me.	23. 29	6
24.	I will not give up.	24. 28	7
25.	I don't always try because someone will tell me I do things the wrong way.	25. 15	20
26.	I am well organized by having materials ready when needed.	26. 15	20
27.	I spend most of my time on my work --not playing around.	27. 4	31
28.	I enjoy playing games and sports.	28. 4	31
29.	I like all of my teachers.	29. 16	19
30.	I usually finish my work on time.	30. 14	21
31.	I can talk to my teachers when I have a problem.	31. 7	28
32.	All of my teachers like me.	32. 1	34
33.	I am smart.	33. 2	33
34.	I am easy to get along with.	34. 27	8
35.	I like learning new things.	35. 13	12

Table 3

Report Card Grade-Point Averages

Total Number of Students = 35

Grade-Point Average	Reporting Period June 1991	November 1991
4.0 - 3.5	0	0
3.4 - 3.0	0	0
2.9 - 2.5	0	0
2.4 - 2.0	4	8
1.9 - 1.5	27	22
1.4 - Below	4	5

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

negative message they received from the world around them. Low self-esteem had resulted in poor adjustment in school. Second, a strong adult model who was easy to relate to was missing. Their accomplishments were marginal, so they received little or no affirmation and acknowledgment. Several were socially isolated and withdrawn. Some needed constant supervision to stay on task and paid little attention to classroom discussions. A final school factor to the cause of the problem was that some students had not assumed responsibility for their success.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

There was extensive evidence in the literature to support the contention that a student's self-concept influences his performance. "Self-concept," as defined by Rampaul, Singh, and Didyk (1984), referred to the general ideas of feelings one has about his/her own personality and characteristics. It is a combination of all the attitudes and beliefs one receives about oneself and one's environment and significant others. Abbott (1981) pointed out children spend most of their time in the classroom and teachers frequently express their attitudes toward them. Primary teachers may play a significant role in the development of students' self-concepts, and ultimately their academic performance.

According to Green (1986), self-image, or the way a child sees himself, and achievement are linked. The more

positive a child's self-image, the greater his achievement. Campbell (1987) wrote that a positive self-image encourages expectations and leads to further achievement. Children high in self-concept (Ames & Felker, 1981) have higher perceptions of themselves and more confidence than low-concept children.

Roger, Smith, and Coleman (1984) held that the importance of academic achievement for self-concept lies not in the absolute level of achievement, but in the child's perceptions of how his/her level of achievement compares with the achievement of those in his/her immediate social environment. Bleuer and Schreiber (1989) related that low self-esteem causes some children to withdraw, which in turn, limits their chances of success in school. McLamb and Lant (1988) summarized the contention that there is a positive relationship between high academic scores and high self-esteem.

A review of the literature indicated there are many factors which contribute to underachievement and poor self-concepts among students. Families have been significantly affected by social changes which contribute to stress for the American family. Bronfenbrenner (1986) wrote that family life has become more hectic and stressful with parents trying to coordinate the desperate demands of family and jobs. Dealing with these challenges may sometimes take precedence over the family's equally

important child-rearing, educational, and nurturing roles. Honig (1986) stressed that social changes (such as the loss of the extended family, the close neighborhoods, and other support systems previously available to families; and the threat of television and other media to the family's traditional role as the primary transmitter of education and values contribute to the risk of alienation in children. Makarenka (1985) wrote that parents spend less educationally related time with their children (e.g., reading, talking, explaining, listening to them read, and talking about things that they have read).

Heuchert and Schultz (1983) reported that marital conflicts in the family disturb the parent/child relationship. Children begin to feel insecure and alienated. Greenberger and Steinberg (1986) added that children caught in conflict at home find it difficult to pay attention in school. They miss out on learning, feel lost in the classroom, and begin to seek acceptance elsewhere.

Recent studies indicate school stress as a causative factor of poor academic performance. Bronfenbrenner (1986) pointed out that in recent years schools have been under increasing pressure to place a very strong emphasis on academics. The stress associated with pressure to achieve "success" and avoid "failure" affect young children in many ways. There is growing concern that well-meaning efforts

at academic preparation are excessively stress-inducing and misdirected. Gerler (1986) believed that placing an overlay of strong academic demands on the current educational climate is likely to result in few increases in learning and instead exacerbate current stress-related problems. Dansky (1980) added that parents are pressuring schools to guarantee their children's future success. Rather than take a developmental perspective, many parents want to see each day used to maximize achievement and skills mastery. Free play is increasingly relegated to a category of "non-productive time." Today's focus in middle schools is on academics, not the improvement of students' self-esteem (Abbott, 1981). Elias (1989) claimed teachers are not sufficiently prepared in the area of fostering positive peer relationships, communication, and self-discipline.

Haley and Berry (1988) wrote that when children see they cannot achieve the academic success demanded by teachers and parents, there is a tendency for them to feel a sense of alienation and disconnectedness from those key socializing influences. Hoffman (1987) warned that children with low self-esteem are at a high risk for substance abuse, early pregnancy, poverty, suicide, and an uncertain future. At these children mature, they may be unable to meet individual, family, or national or social goals.

Several basic factors contributing to underachievement include lack of general achievement motivation, skill deficits, and lack of environmental nurturance (McLamb & Lant, 1988). In addition, students who are underachievers with high academic potential are often seen as creators of their own problems and tend to get no sympathy from teachers. An underachievement pattern (Rimm, 1988) is likely to have a depressing effect on a student's I.Q. test score.

Other factors which contributed to the problem include a society which is highly competitive, and schools and families reflect that competitiveness and human value (Elias, 1989). Hoffman (1987) reported that students who have not learned to cope with competition and to handle losing often view school as a game or chore in which they see little hope for success. Rimm (1988) attributed part of the problem to students who have become accustomed to too much preschool one-to-one attention at home and typically bring this problem to school with them. The dependency on attention of adults and poor study habits that result cause them to lose confidence in their abilities to function well in the classroom.

Henderson and Dickey (1988) reported that children are affected very much by their parents' communications about school and by their modeling of achievement behavior. Underachievers have parents who give contradictory or

negative messages about underachievement. According to Kendig (1988), there are early home patterns that accidentally may initiate underachievement patterns for children, such as illnesses that include hospitalizations, intense sibling rivalry as in same-sex, close-in age siblings, or a long-awaited or overwelcomed child. An only, or one born to older parents whose other children have grown up, and children whose parents are determined to give them everything, are at high risk.

Rimm and Olenchak (1991) found that underachieving students lack a sense of locus of control which means they don't really understand (by their personal experience) the relationship between their efforts and their outcomes. They have not internalized the concept of perseverance. Cox (1984) wrote that often the underachieving student has not formed a close relationship with his teachers and often associates them with his downward spiral of low marks and poor achievement.

Finally, Morse (1987) concluded that some low achievers are procrastinators who have not learned the skills to approach and complete tasks in a more organized way. They are likely to leave a task unfinished and may be overcome by feelings of frustration, failure, and low self-esteem. Waters (1983) added that these students often have trouble understanding what their teacher wants, lack time

management and study skills, and are often convinced that they are incapable of succeeding.

CHAPTER III

OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The goal of this practicum was to improve the academic performance and self-esteem of 35 third and fourth grade underachievers. Specific goals included focusing on self-concept and learning skills reinforcement with the ultimate goal of increasing academic performance and motivation. It was expected that students would realize that they have the power to influence events in their lives, will establish goals, and understand that only through effort and intentionality can desired goals be attained. It was expected that students would achieve as a direct consequence of effort, desire, and ability which would result in a positive self-image. Finally, it was expected that students would perceive themselves as achievers and would realize that achievement and self-worth are inextricably related.

Behavioral Objectives

The following objectives were projected for this practicum:

Objective 1: At the end of 8 months, 33 out of 35 students, after exposure to appropriate intervention strategies, would demonstrate an increase of the

perceptions of their own academic performance, and personal relationships with peers and teachers, by achieving a score of at least 25 on student attitudinal surveys (See Appendix A).

Objective 2: At the end of 8 months, 33 out of 35 students, after instruction, would demonstrate improvement in study skills and time management by receiving "yes" responses to at least 80 percent of the questions on the teacher response questionnaire (See Appendix B).

Objective 3: At the end of 8 months, 33 out of 35 students, after instruction, would demonstrate improvement in reading, by advancing at least one and a half levels in readings, as indicated by responses on surveys of reading levels (See Appendix C).

Objective 4: At the end of 8 months, 33 out of 35 students, after instruction, would demonstrate improvement in math, by advancing at least one and a half levels in math, as indicated by surveys of math level (See Appendix D).

Objective 5: At the end of 8 months, 33 out of 35 students, after instruction, would show improvement in grade-point averages, by increasing at least 10 points in G.P.A., as indicated by report card grades (See Appendix E).

Objective 6: At the end of 8 months, 33 out of 35 students, after instruction, would demonstrate increases in

academic performance and self-esteem, by achieving points of "1" and/or "0" to at least 80 percent of responses, as indicated by teacher responses on the underachievement checklist (See Appendix F).

Measurement of Objectives

The objectives of this practicum were to be measured by the results of six measurement instruments. Objective 1 was to be measured by written student responses to statements on student attitudinal surveys (See Appendix A). Students would circle "yes or no" as the statement pertained to them. This instrument was to measure improvement in students' perceptions of their own academic performance and personal relationships with peers and teachers. A score of 25 points would demonstrate the expected increase. The results were to be compared with the results of attitudinal surveys administered before intervention.

Objective 2 was to be measured by written responses of teachers on teacher response questionnaires (See Appendix B). Ten questions related to student improvement in study skills and time management. The expected improvement would be shown when a student received "yes" responses to at least 80 percent of the questions.

Objective 3 was to be measured by written responses of teachers on teacher survey of reading levels (See Appendix C). Questions related to students' improvement in reading.

The expected improvement would be shown when a student advanced at least one and half levels in reading, as indicated by teachers' responses.

Objective 4 was to be measured by written responses of teachers on teacher survey of math levels (See Appendix D). Questions pertained to students' improvement in math. The expected improvement would be shown when a student advanced at least one and a half levels in math, as indicated by teachers' responses.

Objective 5 was to be measured by students' grade-point averages, as indicated on report cards (See Appendix E). The expected improvement in grade-point average would be shown by increasing at least 10 points in G.P.A.s as compared to G.P.A.s before intervention.

Objective 6 was to be measured by teacher written responses to statements about students' academic performance and self-esteem on the underachievement checklist (See Appendix F). This checklist was designed to identify students who manifested symptoms of underachievement. The expected improvement in academic performance and self-esteem would be shown by achieving points of "1" and/or "0" to at least 80 percent of responses.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

The problem in this practicum was that the academic performance and self-esteem of 35 third and fourth grade students needed to be improved. There was much evidence to indicate a positive relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement. Enhancing students' sense of well-being and attitude toward school helps students to feel good about themselves and to have positive feelings about school. A positive attitude influences choices of activities, effort, persistence at tasks, and motivation to work which, ultimately, increases academic performance. The literature offered many suggestions of successful intervention strategies which have been used to improve academic performance and self-esteem.

Abramson and Turkel (1986) described peer tutoring program which provided a number of positive cognitive and affective gains. Underachievers as well as low achievers profit from being helped by their peers.

Fostering prosocial development by providing extensive interaction among group members and elements of cooperative learning was suggested by Schaps (1990). When underachievers are placed in small heterogeneous cooperative groups and assigned specific roles, their

achievement generally increased and their psychological health improved.

McDonald and Wright (1987) recommended providing every student with a contact person who is always accessible, who gets to know the student well and who remains sensitive to the student's needs. The theory is that all children can improve their academic standing and self-esteem if a confirming atmosphere exists.

Kessler (1990) advised teaching stress management to show students how to manage their lives to minimize stress and to relieve the negative impact of stress. Time management activities which illustrate ways in which students can more effectively use their time to complete chores at home, homework, and extracurricular activities should be taught. Henderson and Dickey (1988) found lessons on emotional expression that explained the importance of understanding and releasing of intense feelings in appropriate ways to be helpful. Sklarz (1984) encouraged the use of bibliotherapy or the use of book and stories in therapy to tell stories about topics that are potentially sources of stress for children.

Fitzpatrick (1984), in a study to establish the impact that affective education has on academic growth, found success in teaching lessons, which focused on self-concept and learning skills development with the ultimate goal of increasing academic performance. Fitzpatrick stated that

students can be expected to perform better when they are reasonably happy, which results in improved attendance and greater achievement gains.

Uninvolved youths often feel powerless to change things. Lewis (1991) advocated teaching social involvement or citizenship participation to teach students to reach outward to solve problems to benefit others. The benefit is that, as students reach outward to solve problems to benefit others, the process internalizes, and they learn to better control their personal lives. Chabby and Elias (1988) encouraged problem solving and decision-making activities which offer students the opportunity to resolve conflict situations instead of engaging in so many distraction activities. A focus on self-expression that emphasizes the positive effects of free writing as a stress management tool was suggested by Klingman (1985).

Text anxiety is a type of behavior that indicates a fear of taking tests and often results in poor performance on tests. Sycamore, Corey, and Coker (1990) recognized the importance of teaching intentional thinking strategies and test-taking skills so that students will be less anxious and will demonstrate improved performance on tests.

Turkel and Abramson (1986) recommended microcomputers as one of the best ways to develop problem solving and independent learning. Microcomputers increase the control students have over learning, and reinforces following

directions. Also recommended was computer-assisted instruction for drill and practice of concepts learned, and for immediate feedback.

Evaluation of possible solutions reported in the literature indicated that there were strategies that had proven effective in improving the academic performance and self-esteem of students. The literature, also, indicated that when these strategies were implemented successfully, children learned better and improved their concentration, commitment, and confidence.

The writer believed that some of the solutions offered in the literature could be implemented with the target group and would prove successful in achieving the specific goals and objectives of this practicum. These solutions would help to boost the students' self-confidence and help them to become achievers.

Description and Justification for Solution Selected

Several strategies were provided in the literature which, in this writer's opinion, would improve the self-esteem and academic achievement of students. Kessler (1990) advised teaching stress management to show students how to manage their lives to minimize stress. Fitzpatrick (1984) found success in teaching lessons which focused on self-concept, time management, and learning skills development. McDonald and Wright (1987) recommended providing every student with a contact person who is always

accessible, who gets to know the student well, and who remains sensitive to the student's needs.

The writer chose to employ several solutions gleaned from the literature, in addition to several generated by the writer. The writer:

1. Used large group sessions which focused on self-esteem, enhancement strategies, study skills, and time management techniques. This enabled the writer to assist in improving the self-esteem of students.

2. Used small group tutorial sessions which focused on skills reinforcement of math and reading concepts. This assisted in improving the academic performance of students.

3. Matched each student with a volunteer adult mentor from the school staff. This proved beneficial because students had a significant adult at school who took a genuine interest in the student and his accomplishments.

These solutions were selected because these strategies were most appropriate and conducive to meeting the particular needs of the target group. The self-esteem and academic performance of the students needed to be improved. The writer believes the selected solutions addressed the problem in this practicum and would achieve the stated objectives.

This practicum was implemented for a period of 8 months, at the writer's work setting. Evaluation of objectives took place 8 months from the day implementation

began. The writer's role was that of teacher and facilitator in large and small group sessions with students. The writer also served as organizer and facilitator of a workshop for adult-volunteer mentors.

Permission to implement this practicum was obtained from the school principal. Materials and supplies used consisted of the usual school supplies, such as pencils, writing paper, crayons, glue, construction paper, and scissors. Computers, located in the writer's classroom and in the school's computer lab, were also used for small group tutoring sessions. Children's books used for lessons were obtained from the school or public library.

Report of Action Taken

The implementation of the solution strategies for this practicum began after receiving approval to begin implementation. After approval was obtained, the writer met with the principal and the teachers in third and fourth grades. The goals and objectives of this practicum were discussed as well as the strategies which would be implemented to improve the students' academic performance and self-esteem. Support was pledged and permission was granted by the principal. Teachers responded to a checklist which was used to identify students who manifested symptoms of underachievement.

The solution strategy for this practicum began with the writer obtaining support and involvement of parents by

informing them by letter of the goals and objectives of the project. The writer then met with the target group to discuss the purpose of the sessions and the schedule.

The second step of the implementation began with a workshop conducted by the writer for staff members who volunteered to serve as mentors. The purpose of the workshop was to provide some of the tools needed to establish respectful and rewarding relationships with students.

During the third step of implementation the writer met with the students. Rules addressing listening, talking, and participation were established and a game "Sign-O" was played which helped students to become acquainted with each other.

The fourth step of implementation consisted of matching each student with a volunteer staff mentor. Matching was done based on common interests and/or characteristics of mentors and students. However, one teacher did request a specific student and that request was honored.

The fifth step of implementation consisted of small group tutorial sessions (twice weekly) which focused on skills reinforcement of math and reading concepts.

The sixth step of implementation consisted of large group sessions conducted by the writer (one day per week for an hour) which focused on self-esteem enhancement

strategies, study skills, test-taking strategies and time management.

The seventh step of implementation consisted of the writer periodically meeting with individual mentors and teachers of the students for updates on the students' progress and suggestions regarding the mentoring program.

The eighth step of implementation at the end of the school year consisted of the writer preparing and giving each student a packet of math and reading activities for practice during the summer. These activities would focus on concepts taught and would provide reinforcement of skills to ensure that knowledge of those skills would not be lost over the summer months. In addition, this would assist in rendering a smooth transition into our last four months of the tutoring program which would resume in September.

The ninth and on-going step of implementation consisted of the writer keeping a personal practicum log to record events related to this practicum.

During the tenth step of implementation students practiced and presented short skits to other classes. The final step of the solution strategy included student assessment. All post-assessment information and data were obtained in order to analyze outcomes of practicum implementation.

During the eight months of implementation several

unexpected changes occurred which caused a change in scheduled plans. Two students developed transportation problems which prevented them from attending the before-and-after school tutoring sessions. Since this problem occurred early in implementation (one week) two other students were recommended by teachers to replace them. In addition, implementation of this practicum started in the midst of school-wide preparation for the annual standardized test. Several teachers requested that tutoring sessions focus more on test-taking skills strategies in math and reading for an additional 15 minutes each tutoring day.

It was not anticipated that students would develop "cold-feet" when faced with the task of meeting and talking to their mentors on an individual and personal level. Several mentors reported students were not visiting them on a regular basis. As a result, the plans for two tutoring sessions had to be adjusted to include strategies on conversation starters and the importance of answering and responding to questions in complex sentences. Students were encouraged to make "All About Me" booklets to use as conversation starters. Mentors and mentees brought in photographs of themselves to present to one another.

Some students expressed concerns about not having enough time during the school day to meet with mentors. These problems were discussed with classroom teachers and

were resolved. Time was scheduled for mentees to meet with mentors on a weekly basis.

Hurricane Andrew left its mark on the school system and the community. The effects were very obvious on the students. Students were displaced and/or had to travel long distances to school. As a result, five students were not able to continue the program. Realizing the devastating effect of such an event, in addition to the deviation from normal routines in the home and school environment, adjustments had to be made in plans. As a result, the twice weekly tutoring sessions included discussions of personal experiences of the hurricane and its effects. Many strategies were used to enhance classroom discussions which included having children draw pictures of the "worst moment during the hurricane" and telling their story. The children re-enacted in dramatic role play their experiences with the hurricane and had group discussions about hurricane preparedness for the future.

These strategies were chosen because the writer believed they would:

-Help students acknowledge and validate their feelings,

-Help promote feelings of trust and safety,

-Provide opportunities to help students with problem solving,

-Help students face reality and help them live in the "here and now" and,

-Help promote hope in the students for the future.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The problem that existed was the students in the target group for this practicum were considered underachievers by their teachers. They were identified as students who were not performing to full intellectual abilities. All were functioning below potential in school and often in other areas of their lives. None of the students manifested specific identifiable learning problems which might have qualified them for special help. There were several causes to this problem. Most of the students exhibited poor study habits, did not prepare for tests, spent too little time at home doing homework, and occasionally failed to turn in completed assignments. Some lacked organization, which impeded productivity. The students were struggling to keep up with their classes. Most were placed in low reading and math groups because they appeared to be unmotivated and irresponsible. Some students were shy, withdrawn, and had few friends. Their attitude toward school and school subjects was negative. The problem was that the academic performance and self-esteem of the students needed to be improved.

The solution to this problem was to employ several strategies. The first solution involved using large group

sessions which focused on self-esteem enhancement strategies, study skills, and time management skills. This strategy would enable the writer in assisting in the improvement of students' self-esteem. The second solution consisted of small group tutorial sessions which focused on skills reinforcement of math and reading concepts. This strategy would help to improve the academic performance of students. The third solution selected was the matchin of each student with a volunteer adult mentor from the school staff. This would prove beneficial because students would have a significant adult at school who would take a genuine interest in the student and his accomplishments.

The goal of this practicum was that the self-esteem and academic performance of the students would improve. This goal would be obtained by application of a combination of strategies.

Specific objectives were designed to achieve the goals. Due to the hurricane, 5 of the 35 students had to relocate and were not able to continue the program. As a result of having fewer students in the target population, the outcomes have been adjusted to reflect the achievement of 25 out of 30 students. The following list includes each objective and the results related to each objective:

Objective 1: It was adjusted so that at the end of 8 months 25 out of 30 students would demonstrate an increase of the perceptions of their own academic performance, and

personal relationships with peers and teachers, by achieving a score of at least 25 on Student Attitudinal Surveys. Table 4 shows the results of this objective as compared to responses on Student Attitudinal Surveys administered before intervention.

Table 4

Comparison of Student Attitudinal Surveys*

Number of Students = 30

Scores	Before Intervention	After Intervention
25 or better	0	30
24 - 20	2	0
19 - 15	20	0
14 - 10	8	0
9 - 5	0	0
4 - 0	0	0

*After eight-month implemention period

Results of responses of students on attitudinal surveys revealed that all 30 students who completed the program felt better about themselves and had an increase in the perceptions of their academic performance and personal relationships with peers and teachers. This was indicated

by 30 students achieving a score of 25 or better. The goal of this objective was achieved.

Objective 2: It was adjusted so that at the end of 8 months, 25 out of 30 students would demonstrate improvement in study skills and time management by receiving "yes" responses to at least 80 percent on the questions on the Teacher Questionnaire. Table 5 shows the results of this objective.

Table 5

Results of Teacher Response Questionnaire*

(Number of Students = 30)

	Number Receiving "Yes" Responses
1. Spends ample time studying and preparing for assignments	25
2. Turns in assignments on time	27
3. Turns in assignments which are legible and complete	23
4. Has materials ready when needed	28
5. Is organized	22
6. Pays attention to the teacher	28
7. Works well by himself	28
8. Asks for more directions if he/she does not understand	30
9. Follows directions to complete assignments completely	29
10. Takes pride in work	27

*After eight-month implementation

Results of Teacher Response Questionnaires showed that students received "yes" responses to 80 percent of the questions. The goal of this objective was achieved.

Objective 3: It was adjusted so that at the end of 8 months 25 out of 30 students would demonstrate improvement in reading, by advancing at least one and a half levels in reading. Table 6 shows the results of this objective.

Table 6

Results of Survey of Reading Levels*

(Number of students = 30)

	Levels Advanced			
	2 levels	1 1/2 levels	1 level	No advancement
Number of students advancing in reading	2	23	5	0

*After eight month implementation period

Results regarding Objective 3 of the Survey of Reading Levels by students revealed that 25 out of 30 students advanced at least 1 1/2 levels. The expected goal of this objective was achieved.

Objective 4: It was asjusted so that at the end of 8 months, 25 out of 30 students would demonstrate improvement

in math by advancing at least one and a half levels in math. Table 7 shows the results of this objective.

Table 7

Results of Survey of Math Levels*

(Number of students = 30)

	Levels Advanced			
	2 levels	1 1/2 levels	1 level	No advancement
Number of students advancing in math	0	25	5	0

*After eight-month implementation of period

Results of the responses of teachers on the Math Level Survey revealed that 25 students advanced at least 1 1/2 levels in math. Two students advanced two levels in math which exceeded expectations. The goal of this objective was met.

Objective 5: It was adjusted so that at the end of 8 months, 25 out of 30 students would show improvement in grade-point averages by increasing at least 10 points in G.P.A., as indicated by report card grades. Table 8 shows the results of this objective.

Results of comparison of report card grade-point averages revealed that 24 out of 30 students advanced at

least 10 points in G.P.A. The goal of this objective was almost met.

Objective 6: It was adjusted so that at the end of 8 months, 25 out of 30 students would demonstrate increases in academic performance and self-esteem by achieving points of "1" and/or "0" to at least 80 percent of responses as indicated by teacher responses on the Underachievement Checklist. Table 9 shows the results of this objective.

Table 8

Comparison of Report Card Grade-Point Averages*

(Number of students = 30)

G.P.A.	1991	1992	Number of students increasing 10 points in G.P.A.
4.0-3.0	0	11	11
2.9-2.0	8	21	13
1.9-1.0	27	3	0
0.9-Below	0	0	0

*After eight-month implementation

Table 9

Results of Teacher Responses on the Underachievement Checklist*

(Number of students = 30)

	Statement Responses		
	1-6	7-13	14-18
Number of students achieving points of "1" and/or "0" to at least 80 percent of responses	28	29	29
	28	29	29

*After eight-month implementation

Results of teacher responses on the Underachievement Checklist showed that at least 25 out of 30 students achieved points of "1" and/or "0" to at least 80 percent of responses. This demonstrated increases in academic performance and self-esteem. The goal of this objective was achieved.

Discussion

A review and interpretation of the data collected revealed that all six of the objectives were achieved. This also indicates the basic premise underlying this practicum, students' self-esteem and academic performance can be improved. The results confirmed the writer's

expectation that by using large group sessions which focus on self-esteem enhancement strategies, study skills and time management, students' self-esteem would improve. It was confirmed that by using small group tutorial sessions which focus on skills reinforcement of math and reading concepts, students' academic performance would improve. The results also confirmed that it is beneficial to match each student with an adult mentor from the school staff who takes a genuine interest in the student. The literature offered many suggestions of others who also had been successful in utilizing the chosen solution strategies.

Fitzpatrick (1984), in a study to establish the impact that affective education has on academic growth, found success in teaching lessons which focused on self-concept and learning skills development with the ultimate goal of increasing academic performance. Fitzpatrick found that students can be expected to perform better when they are reasonably happy which results in improved attendance and greater achievement gains.

Kessler (1990) used stress management techniques to show students how to manage their lives to minimize stress and to relieve the negative impact of stress. Time management was taught which illustrated ways in which students can more effectively use their time to complete chores at home, homework, and extracurricular activities.

Henderson and Dickey (1988) found lessons to be helpful on emotional expression that explained the importance of understanding and releasing of intense feelings in appropriate ways.

McDonald and Wright (1987) recommended providing every student with a contact person who is always accessible, who gets to know the student well and who remains sensitive to the student's needs. The theory is that all children can improve their academic standing and self-esteem if a confirming atmosphere exists.

The achievement of these objectives showed improvement in students' perceptions of their own academic performance and personal relationships with peers and teachers. The achievement of the goals also showed that students perceived themselves as achievers, and that they realized that achievement and self-worth are extricably related.

All goals were met and several implications are obvious in relation to the achievement of these goals under such unusual circumstances. Faced with the worst disaster in recorded U. S. history, Hurricane Andrew, this year's school opening was more unsetttled than usual and presented special challenges. The results of this practicum show that in spite of having experienced a traumatic event, students dusted themselves off, readjusted and worked to the best of their abilities. Several factors or

implications, the writer believes, contributed to the success attained by the students.

The first implication recognizes the urgency of psychological support and strategies to help students deal with crises. District staff from the Division of Student Services, and the Department of Psychological Service, and the Division of Attendance and Support Services met prior to the opening of school to identify perceived needs and to secure resources to assist in the aftermath of the disaster. A plan was developed to provide additional support and counseling services to impacted schools and the community. The impact of support services to schools and the community was overwhelming. Numerous responses to schools' crises were met by the District Crisis Response Team and school psychologists. Crisis Core Team training was provided as a result of the heightened awareness of schools to their vulnerability to crisis. All pitched in to help with students and staff debriefings, and provided strategies to help students.

The second implication of this practicum is that although much of what is usually done to orient students to the new school year continues, the traumatic experience calls for special consideration. Keeping this point in mind solution strategies were adjusted to satisfy the needs of the students. An atmosphere of mutual caring and

concern among classroom members was encouraged which helped to set a tone of belonging. Students were provided extra assistance in learning and adjusting, and realistic expectations were set for the completion of classwork and other assignments. Open discussions were facilitated which allowed students ample time to talk about their recent experiences. The writer used the discussions to provide factual information, to help allay fears and stop rumors. Students were encouraged to verbalize their feelings and were reassured that all their feelings were accepted (e.g., anger, sadness, fear, confusion). The writer and other teachers shared their own feelings which helped to normalize the students' feelings.

The third implication is that in the aftermath of a traumatic experience, students need ways of expressing their experiences, their feelings, their thoughts, and their memories. This kind of expression can go a long way in helping individuals to heal. The writer adjusted large and small group sessions to include reading and writing, oral expression, games and drawings which allowed students to tell the stories they had experienced. From art therapy to support groups, a variety of interventions were put into place for students.

The fourth implication is that school and peer relationships, and other support systems, play major roles

in ameliorating children's emotional disturbances. This points out the importance of these relationships as a corrective force in a child's development. In their improved relationships with teachers and students, the target group experienced a close sharing of feelings and life events and a mutual growth of esteem between them and their friends. Because of the closeness of the students' relationships with their mentors and peers, large areas of anxiety-laden and dissociated experiences were brought out into the open and seen in light of another's comment. In the process, students received affirmation, acknowledgement, and support; thus, were no longer isolated which increased their chances in school.

The last implication in this practicum affirms the point of view that children have higher perceptions of themselves when they have tangible experiences which prove their worth and lovability. The writer believes the students had experienced success early on and felt good about themselves. The writer believes the students had internalized the concept of determination, so when exposed to an event which was outside the range of usual human experience, these students persevered. The writer believes the students had learned the skills necessary to approach and complete tasks in a more organized way. All of these accomplishments boosted their self-confidence and self-

esteem, which helped them to become achievers; and which, ultimately, improved their academic performance.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the mentoring program be extended to include more students to afford them the opportunity to have a significant adult who takes a genuine interest in their accomplishments.
2. It is recommended that large and small group tutoring sessions begin earlier in the school year to ensure mastery of additional skills in reading and math.
3. It is recommended that this tutoring program, which focuses on improving self-esteem and academic performance be implemented and continued on a regular basis.

Dissemination

As a result of the effectiveness of this practicum, the writer has decided to continue with the plan this school year and to implement the tutoring and mentoring program in the future. Administrators, teachers, staff members and parents will be given specific outcome data and information about the implications for implementation. The writer will make available and share the practicum with other schools in the area and in the district. The school PTA and business partners in the community will receive a general discussion of the program and its benefits.

REFERENCES

Abbott, A. A. (1981). Factors related to third grade achievement: Self-perception, classroom composition, sex, and race. Contemporary Educational Psychology, 6, pp. 167-179.

Ames, C. & Felker, D. W. (1981). Effects of self-concept on children's causal attributions and selfreinforcement. Journal of Educational Psychology, 71(5), pp. 613-619.

Bell, J. (1990). Every kid's guide to coping with childhood traumas. New York, Random House.

Bleur, J. C. & Schreiber, P. A. (1989). Counseling young students at risk: Resources for elementary counselors (1st ed.). ERIC, ED 307 524.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986). Alienation and the four worlds of childhood. Phi Delta Kappan, 67(6), pp. 430-436.

Campbell, P. B. (1987). School and self-concept: Educational leadership, 51, pp. 510-513.

Canter, L. (1989). How to study and take tests. Santa Monica, CA: Lee Cantor & Associates, Inc.

Carey, A. R. (1986). Imagery: Paintings in the mind. Elementary School Guidance and Counseling, 21, pp. 150-154.

Chabby, J. F. & Elias, M. J. (1988). Your child can learn to make decisions. PTA Today, 13(1), pp. 14-15.

Churchill, R. E. (1989). Tests: How to study for, take, and ace any test! Los Angeles, CA: Price Stern Sloan, Inc.

Cohen, S. A. & Foreman, D. I. (1987). Scoring high in math: Book B, Revised Edition. New York: Random House.

Cohen, S. A. & Foreman, D. I. (1987). Scoring high in reading: Book B, Revised Edition. New York: Random House.

Cox, L. (1984). Adaptive monitoring. Gifted Child Today, 13(1), pp. 54-56.

Dade County Public Schools. (1989). Building trust through substance education curriculum: Instructional objectives for a balanced curriculum. Dade County, FL.

Dansky, J. (1980). Make believe: A mediator of the relationship between play and associative fluency. Child Development, 51(3), pp. 576-91.

D'Apice, R. A. (1987). Weekly Reader skills book: How to solve word problems, Book 3. Weekly Reader. Middletown, CT.

Elias, H. J. (1989). Schools as a source of stress to children: An analysis of causal and ameliorative influences. Journal of School Psychologists, 27(4), pp. 393-404.

Fitzpatrick, N. (1984). Secondary III Core Program is for underachieving average ability students. NASSP Bulletin, pp. 94-97. EJ 294-992.

Gerler, E. R. (1986). Skills for adolescence: A new program for young teenagers. Phi Delta Kappan, 67(6), pp. 436-438.

Green, L. (1986). Kids who underachieve. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Greenberger, E. & Steinberg, L. (1985). The works of growing up. New York: Basic Books.

Haley, P. & Berry, K. (1988). Home and school partnerships: Helping parents help their children. Andover, MA: The Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands.

Henderson, P. A. & Dickey, J. P. (1988). How do students perceive and cope with stress. Elementary School Journal, 20(2), pp. 16-17.

Heuchert, C. M. & Schultz, E. W. (1983). Child stress and the school experience. New York: Human Sciences Press, Inc.

Hierstein, J. & Pincus, D. (1990). Feeling good about yourself: Strategies to guide young people toward more positive, personal feelings. Carthage, IL: Good Apple, Inc. Hoffman, E. (1987). What confronts today's youth? Junior League Review, 69(2), pp. 8-30.

Honig, A. (1986). Stress and coping in children (Part I), Young Children, 41, pp. 50-62.

Hope, J. A., Leutzinger, L., Reys, B. J., Reys, R. E. (1988). Mental math in the primary grades. Palo Alto, CA.: Dale Seymour Publications.

Kendig, K. (1988). Practical techniques for dealing with underachievement and self-concept. Gifted Child Today, 11(3), pp. 7-9. Kennedy, J. (1988). Contemporary children's literature: Reading to your class, Grades 2-3. Grand Rapids, MI.: Instructional Fair, Inc.

Kessler, S. (1990). Exploring the mysteries of life. Mind-Body Health Digest, 4(3), pp. 5-6.

Klingman, A. (1985). Free writing: Evaluation of a preventative program with elementary school children. The Journal of School Psychology, 23, pp. 167-175.

Lewis, B. A. (1991). Today's kids care about social action. Educational Leadership, 49(1), pp. 47-49.

Makarenko, A. S. (1981). The collective family: A Handbook for Russian Parents. New York: Doubleday.

McDonald, N. & Wright, E. (1987). MOP: A strategy for dropout prevent. Clearinghouse, 60(8), pp. 367-368.

McLamb, L. W. & Lant, M. (1988). Tapping academic potential. Gifted Child Today, 11(5), pp. 20-21.

Morse, L. A. (1987). Working with elementary school students who do not complete school assignments. Elementary School Guidance and Counseling, 21(3), pp. 221-227.

Pertik, M. & Senter, S. (1990). Stress management and me: Participation activities to brighten each student's day. Nashville, TN.: Incentive Publications, Inc.

Rampaul, W. E., Singh, M. & Didyk, J. (1984). The relationship between academic achievement, selfconcept, creativity, and teacher expectations among native children in a Northern Manitoba School. Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 30(3), p. 213.

Rimm, S. (1988). Identifying underachievement: The characteristics approach. Gifted Child Today, 11(1), pp. 50-54.

Rimm, S. & Olenchak, R. F. (1991). How FPS helps underachieving gifted students. Gifted Child Today, 14(2), pp. 19-22.

Rogers, C. M. Smith, M. D., & Coleman, M. J. (1984). Social Comparison in the classroom: The relationship between academic achievement and self-concept. Journal of Educational Psychology, 74(3), pp. 49-56.

Rowen, L. (1990). Beyond winning: Sports and games all kids want to play. Belmont, CA.: Tearon Teacher Aids.

Sanders, C. (1985). Choosing: Activities to encourage responsible decision making. Carthage, IL.: Good Apple, Inc.

Schaps, E. & Salomon, D. (1990). Schools and classrooms as caring communities. Educational Leadership, 77, pp. 38-42.

Schwartz, L. (1990). What would you do? A kid's guide to tricky and sticky situations. Santa Barbara, CA.: Learning Works, Inc.

Sklarz, D. P. (1984). Keep at-risk students in school by keeping them up to grade level. American School Board Journal, pp. 3-34.

Sycamore, J. E., Corey, A. N., Coker, D. H. (1990). Strategies for reducing test anxiety. Elementary School Guidance and Counseling, 24, pp. 231-233.

Sykes, E. L. (1986). Arithmetic activities handbook: An individualized and group approach to teaching basic skills. New York: Parker Publishing. Tests, grades 5-8: How to study and take. Santa Monica, CA.: Lee Canter & Associates.

Turkel, S. B. & Abramson, T. (1986). Tutoring and mentoring as drop-out prevention strategy. Clearinghouse, 60(2), pp. 68-71.

Waters, M. K. (1983). I've been tested, rejected and neglected. Academic Therapy, pp. 547-554. EJ 289 865.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

STUDENT ATTITUDINAL SURVEY

APPENDIX A

STUDENT ATTITUDINAL SURVEY

Directions: Read each statement carefully. Put a circle around the word Yes if you think it is true about you. Put a circle around the word No if you think it is not true about you.

Yes No 1. I like school.

Yes No 2. I am pleased with the work I do in school.

Yes No 3. My parents are pleased with my schoolwork.

Yes No 4. I like school because I have friends with whom I can play.

Yes No 5. I like doing work that is up to expected standards.

Yes No 6. People make fun of me.

Yes No 7. I like everyone I know.

Yes No 8. I do my best in everything I do.

Yes No 9. I cry easily.

Yes No 10. Others seem to do things easier than I do.

Yes No 11. I have trouble making friends.

Yes No 12. I worry most of the time.

Yes No 13. I am always kind.

Yes No 14. Other people are happier than I.

Yes No 15. I worry about how well I am doing in school.

Yes No 16. Nobody likes me.

Yes No 17. I always get in trouble.

Yes No 18. Other students get all of the attention.

Yes No 19. It is easier not to even try.

Yes No 20. It is okay to make mistakes.

Yes No 21. The more I practice something, the better I become.

Yes No 22. I might not be able to do everything, but I can do something.

Yes No 23. I have lots of people who love and care for me.

Yes No 24. I will not give up.

Yes No 25. I don't always try because someone will tell me I do things the wrong way.

Yes No 26. I am well organized by having materials ready when needed.

Yes No 27. I spend most of my time on my work--not playing around.

Yes No 28. I enjoy playing games and sports.

Yes No 29. I like all of my teachers.

Yes No 30. I usually finish my work on time.

Yes No 31. I can talk to my teachers when I have a problem.

Yes No 32. All of my teachers like me.

Yes No 33. I am smart.

Yes No 34. I am easy to get along with.

Yes No 35. I like learning new things.

NAME: _____ SCORE: _____

APPENDIX B

TEACHER RESPONSE QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX B

TEACHER RESPONSE QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME OF STUDENT: _____ TEACHER:_____

GRADE: _____

This questionnaire is designed to record student progress in time management and study skills. Check yes or no as each question relates to the student.

		YES	NO
1.	Spends ample time studying and preparing for assignments.	___	___
2.	Turns in assignments on time.	___	___
3.	Turns in assignments which are legible and complete.	___	___
4.	Has materials ready when needed.	___	___
5.	Is organized.	___	___
6.	Pays attention to the teacher.	___	___
7.	Works well by himself/herself.	___	___
8.	Asks for more directions if he/she does not understand.	___	___
9.	Follows directions to complete assignments correctly.	___	___
10.	Takes pride in work.	___	___

APPENDIX C

SURVEY OF READING LEVELS

APPENDIX C

SURVEY OF READING LEVELS

NAME OF STUDENT: _____ TEACHER: _____

GRADE: _____

The following survey is designed to identify student progress in reading. Write the reading level at which each student performed 8 months ago, and at which he/she is presently performing.

	Reading Performance Level	
Student's Name	Before Intervention	After Intervention
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX D

SURVEY OF MATH LEVELS

APPENDIX D

SURVEY OF MATH LEVELS

NAME OF STUDENT: _____ TEACHER: _____

GRADE: _____

The following survey is designed to identify student progress in math. Write the math level at which each student performed 8 months ago, and the level at which he/she is performing now.

Student's Name	Math Performance Level Before Intervention	After Intervention

APPENDIX E

REPORT CARD GRADE POINT AVERAGES

APPENDIX E

REPORT CARD GRADE POINT AVERAGE LIST

The following Report Card Grade Point Average List is designed to record G.P.A. of students at the beginning and end of an 8-month period. List each student's name and G.P.A. for each period.

	GRADE POINT AVERAGE	
Student's Name	Before Intervention	After Intervention

APPENDIX F

UNDERACHIEVEMENT CHECKLIST

APPENDIX F

UNDERACHIEVEMENT CHECKLIST

The following Underachievement Checklist is designed to help in the identification of students who might be manifesting symptoms of underachievement. Write the appropriate number after each characteristic.

Student's Name _____Grade _____

Level: Reading _____ Math _____

CODE: 0 = Never 1 = Sometimes 2 = Often 3 = Always

1. Schoolwork is sloppy and illegible. ___
2. Often procrastinates. ___
3. Assignments are often incomplete. ___
4. Is having difficulty keeping up w/class. ___
5. Work is not handed in on time. ___
6. Is disorganized. ___
7. Is irresponsible. ___
8. Is forgetful. ___
9. Lacks pride in his/her work. ___
10. Shows little motivation. ___
11. Avoids academic work. ___
12. Makes excuses for poor performance. ___
13. Avoids challenges. ___
14. Lacks self-confidence. ___
15. Becomes easily discouraged. ___
16. Abandons difficult projects. ___
17. Is easily frustrated. ___
18. Is functioning below potential. ___

Total Points: _____